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Letter dated 28 April 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

As you are aware, the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement and the Accra meeting of 7 March 2003 set out the broad framework and steps to be taken to enable Côte d'Ivoire to emerge from the military and political crisis which has been ravaging the country since 19 September 2002.

On instructions from my Government, and bearing in mind the Security Council's keen interest in my country and, in particular, in the resolution of this crisis, I have the honour to inform you of the progress made in implementing those agreements, and of our concerns with regard to certain reactions of the Security Council.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

You will no doubt recall that, on 25 January 2003, by means of a decree issued at the Embassy of Côte d'Ivoire in France, the President of the Republic appointed by consensus Ambassador Seydou Elimane Diarra as Prime Minister.

That significant event was followed by another of equal importance, namely the delegation of substantial powers to Prime Minister Diarra by means of a decree dated 10 March 2003.

Furthermore, by a decree dated 13 March 2003, the National Security Council was established and, immediately thereafter, its members were appointed.

In addition, following a proposal put forward by the Prime Minster, the members of the Government of National Reconciliation were appointed by a decree dated 13 March 2003.

Pending the appointment by the National Security Council, by consensus, in accordance with the Accra Agreement, of two prominent figures to head the Departments of Defence and the Interior, two Ministers were nominated by the Prime Minister and appointed by a decree dated 24 March 2003 to ensure the interim running of these two important ministerial departments.

In this connection, I am pleased to inform you that five sessions of the Council of Ministers have already been held: the two most recent sessions were held in Abidjan and brought together all the members of the Government, including those from the rebel side.

In view of these significant developments towards a return to peace and stability in Côte d'Ivoire, allow me to convey to you our entire satisfaction with the untiring and

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relentless efforts made by the United Nations since the outbreak of the conflict to find a lasting political situation to the serious crisis which, for more than seven months, has been destabilizing Côte d'Ivoire and the whole of the West African subregion.

The Ivorian Government would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm to you and to all the members of the Security Council its deepest gratitude for your unceasing support.

On behalf of the Government, I should like to convey particular thanks to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, whose personal commitment to the resolution of the crisis has contributed significantly to the encouraging results we have obtained.

Nevertheless, despite this progress, the Ivorian Government is concerned at the disinterest of the international community, and in particular of the Council, with regard to the numerous atrocities and flagrant violations of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, in particular the ceasefire, which are endangering the peace process.

This attitude is all the more disturbing since it gives the Government and the suffering population the unwelcome impression that the international community is indifferent to the tragedies which are occurring on a daily basis in rebel-controlled areas and, in particular, in western Côte d'Ivoire.

Since the crisis began, no statements or public communiqués issued by the Security Council have expressly or strongly condemned the atrocities committed in the occupied areas. Nor has there been any condemnation of the rapes, looting, racketeering, thefts and summary executions. Even Security Council resolution 1464 (2003) does not condemn the aggressors.

In contrast, in Government-controlled areas, Ivorians have only to organize demonstrations, in exercise of a universally recognized democratic right, to be vilified and accused of colluding with the Government, the authority of which certain elements are seeking to undermine.

Likewise, when the Government exercises its right to self-defence, as provided for in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, it is challenged. And as though the Government were being prevented from defending itself, it is criticized for using MI-24 helicopters, which are classed as conventional weapons.

The Council should be reminded that the rebel forces have at their disposal much more sophisticated weapons than those used by the loyalist forces, and that neither the use nor the origin of those weapons has ever seemed to concern the international community. It would appear that some people are hoping that the national army will be defeated and, in consequence, that the current regime will be overturned.

The signing of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, which mobilized the entire international community, gave rise to genuine hopes regarding an end to the crisis.

In order to preserve the chances for a successful outcome of the peace process, the Security Council should demonstrate increased vigilance and do everything in its power to ensure that the rebel forces respect the terms of the Agreement, in particular the ceasefire, and put an end to all atrocities committed in the areas under their control.

(*Signed*) D. Philippe **Djangoné-Bi**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative